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54 ULTRASONIC SURGICAL APPARATUS.

57 Ultrasonic surgical apparatus which breaks, sucks and removes an undesirable matter such as a tumor tissue, a thrombus, a calcium mass, and the like inside the body, by ultrasonic vibration of a flexible ultrasonic probe (17). The apparatus has a horn (5) which is connected to an ultrasonic vibration source (4) to transmit and expand mechanical vibration of an ultrasonic frequency, an ultrasonic probe (17) which is fixed to the tip of the horn (5) and includes a flexible linear transmission member (44) having a working portion (21) causing mechanical vibration of the ultrasonic frequency, a horn cover (6) at least part of which is made of a flexible material, and a flexible tube (8) which has at least one cavity and at least one branch pipe communicating with said cavity and is connected to the horn cover (6) through one branch pipe (7). The ultrasonic probe (17) is positioned in one cavity (20) communicating with one branch pipe (7) of said tube (8), and a suction device (11) and a liquid injector (14) are connected to any of said at least one branch pipe.

SPECIFICATION

ULTRASONIC SURGICAL APPARATUS

1 TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to an ultrasonic surgical apparatus for crushing, sucking, and removing undesirable substances existing in the body, such as
5 ulcerous tissue, thrombuses, calcification aggregates, by means of ultrasonic vibrations of a flexible ultrasonic probe.

BACKGROUND ART

Conventionally, as the methods of removing
10 thrombuses, there are a method of inserting a catheter into a thrombus portion and dissolve the thrombus by injecting thereinto a thrombolytic agent such as streptokinase (e.g., Japanese Patent Unexamined Publication No. 57-173065); a method of withdrawing a catheter
15 while maintaining the balloon of a balloon catheter in an expanded state and, at the same time, removing a thrombus (e.g., Japanese Patent Examined Publication No. 49-16472); and a method of clamping a thrombus portion by two expanded balloons, softening the thrombus
20 by injecting a thrombolytic agent thereinto, and withdrawing a catheter and at the same time removing the thrombus (e.g., Published Japanese Translation of PCT Appln., Publication No. 58-501983).

However, even if the thrombolytic agent is

1 injected locally through the catheter, there is a
drawback in that the thrombolytic agent flows into normal
terminal blood vessels and the like, thereby entailing
the risk of hemorrhage in the terminal blood vessels
5 and the like. Further, in the case where the catheter
is withdrawn while maintaining the balloon of the balloon
catheter in a expanded state to simultaneously remove
the thrombus from the body, there was the risk of causing
damage to the inner wall of a blood vessel since a
10 safety measure against a tensile stress applied to the
inner wall of the blood vessel has not been taken. In
the case where a catheter provided with two balloons is
used as a similar method of removing a thrombus, when a
thrombus 27 is calmped by two balloons 31, 32 as shown
15 in Fig. 7, the balloon 32 located closer to the tip of
a catheter 30 needs to be inserted from a position 34
in front of a thrombus 27 up to a position 35 which is
deeper than that of the thrombus 27, so that there was
the danger of pushing, by the balloon 32, the thrombus
20 27 in the inserting direction 33, thereby moving the
thrombus 27 to another part, such as a terminal blood
vessel.

Furthermore, as a method of mechanically
removing a thrombus, there is one in which a drill bit
25 is provided to the tip of a bar-like member, the drill
bit is made to rotate by rotating the bar-like member,
and the thrombus is crushed by the drill bit rotation.
With this method, however, a torsional stress is applied

1 to the inner wall of the blood vessel, so that there is
a drawback in that the blood vessel may be cut off by
the stress, and adjustment of the number of revolutions
and the like is hence made difficult.

5 Further, recently, as a surgical apparatus
using ultrasonic, apparatuses are known in which an
ultrasonic probe is connected to a source of ultrasonic
vibration, tissue, a calcification aggregate, thrombus,
or the like is crushed by mechanical vibrations of an
10 ultrasonic frequency at the tip of the ultrasonic probe,
and the crushed tissue, calcification aggregate, thrombus,
or the like is removed through an inner hole provided
in the ultrasonic probe (e.g., Japanese Patent Unexamined
Publication Nos. 60-5139 and 49-21989). With such
15 apparatuses, however, since the ultrasonic probe having
a working portion which mechanically vibrates at an
ultrasonic frequency is not flexible, there was a
drawback in that it would be difficult to insert it
into a curved blood vessel or a tubular tissue inside
20 the body.

The present invention is aimed at removing such
drawbacks of the conventional methods of removing
thrombuses as the fear of hemorrhage caused by a
thrombolytic agent, the risk of causing damage to blood
25 vessel owing to a tensile or torsional stress applied
to the inner wall of the blood vessel by the balloon
catherter, or the movement of the thrombus upon inser-
tion of the balloon catherter, and also aimed at

1 enabling to crush and remove a thrombus, a calcification
aggregate or the like in the tubular tissue of a curved
blood vessel or the like for which an operation has been
difficult to conduct with the conventional ultrasonic
5 surgical apparatuses. As a result of the diligent
study, there was completed an ultrasonic surgical
apparatus which is capable of allowing a flexible
ultrasonic probe to be inserted directly into the
affected part, crushing an undesirable substances in
10 the body such as a thrombus and a calcification aggregate
by means of mechanical vibrations of an ultrasonic
frequency, and removing the same by suction without
affecting the normal surrounding tissue.

DISCLOSURE OF INVENTION

15 Namely, the present invention provides an
ultrasonic surgical apparatus including an ultrasonic
vibration source for generating ultrasonic vibrations,
an oscillator for supplying high-frequency electric
energy to the ultrasonic vibration source, a horn
20 connected to the ultrasonic vibration source and adapted
to transmit and amplify mechanical vibrations of an
ultrasonic frequency, and a suction device for sucking
and removing an undesirable substances from an operated
part, characterized in that there are provided an
25 ultrasonic probe which is constituted by a flexible
linear transmitting member secured at one end to a tip
of the horn and having at the other end a working

1 portion adapted to effect mechanical vibration of an
ultrasonic frequency, a horn cover at least a portion
of which is made of a flexible material, and a flexible
tube having one or not less than two inner hole(s) and
5 one or not less than two branch tube(s) communicating
with the inner hole(s) and connected to the born cover,
and that the ultrasonic probe is disposed in the one
inner hole and the suction device is connected to the
one branch tube.

10 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a view illustrating the overall
construction of an ultrasonic surgical apparatus in
accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;
Fig. 2 is an enlarged diagram of a handpiece portion
15 and illustrates the construction of the interior of
a horn cover; Figs. 3(a) and 3(b) are enlarged views of
a bellows portion, in which Fig. 3(a) shows a state in
which the bellows portion is extended, while Fig. 3(b)
shows a state in which the bellows portion is shrunk;
20 Fig. 4 is a view illustrating an example of the confi-
guration of the handpiece; Figs. 5(a) and 5(b) are
views explaining an example of using the apparatus in
accordance with the present invention; Figs. 6(a) and
6(b) are views illustrating an example of the cross-
25 sectional structure of a flexible tube; and

Fig. 7 is a view illustrating a conventional
method.

1 BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

Next, the invention will be described in detail with reference to the drawings. Fig. 1 is a view illustrating the overall construction of an ultrasonic surgical apparatus in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. As shown in Fig. 1, the apparatus comprises four sections consisting of a section for generating mechanical vibrations of an ultrasonic frequency which is constituted by an oscillator 1 and a handpiece 36, a suction section constituted by a suction device 11 and a suction bottle 12, a liquid injecting section constituted by a liquid injector 14, and a catheter section constituted by a flexible tube 8 and branch tubes 7, 9, and 47.

High-frequency electric energy is supplied from the oscillator 1 to the handpiece 36 via cables 2, 3. The handpiece 36 is, as shown in Fig. 2, constituted from an ultrasonic vibration source 4, a horn 5, a horn cover 6, and an ultrasonic probe 17. The high-frequency electric energy is supplied to the ultrasonic vibration source 4, and the ultrasonic vibration source 4 generates mechanical vibrations of an ultrasonic frequency and the vibrations are transmitted to the horn 5. The mechanical vibrations are enlarged at the horn 5 and are transmitted to the ultrasonic probe 17.

The oscillator 1 has an oscillation circuit which is capable of supplying high-frequency electric

1 energy corresponding to fluctuations in the state of the
mechanical load of the horn 5 and the ultrasonic probe
17. Although 15 - 40 kHz is suitable as an oscillation
frequency, 20 - 30 kHz is preferable in view of the
5 mechanical vibrations of the ultrasonic frequency and
the crushing capability of the ultrasonic probe 17.

Although the connection between the ultrasonic
vibration source 4 and the horn 5 is made by a screwing
method, it is not limited thereto. The ultrasonic
10 vibration source 4 is not particularly restricted
insofar as it converts high-frequency electric energy of
the magnetostriction type, the electrostatic type,
or the like into mechanical vibrations. As the material
of the horn 5, a metallic material which is capable of
15 transmitting and enlarging the mechanical vibrations
of an ultrasonic frequency and has a fatigue strength
sufficient to withstand the mechanical vibrations is
suitable, and stainless steel, duralumin, a titanium
alloy, or the like is preferable.

20 Further, as a method of connecting the horn 5
and the ultrasonic probe 17, the screwing method,
welding, or the like is suitable. The ultrasonic probe
17 is constituted by a fixing member 43 and a flexible
linear transmitting member 44, and, as a method of
25 connecting the fixing member 43 and the linear transmit-
ting member 44, welding, adhesion, or the like is
suitable. The materials of the fixing member 43 and
the linear transmitting member 44 are not particularly

1 limited if they are capable of transmitting the mechanical vibrations of an ultrasonic frequency and have a fatigue strength capable of withstanding the mechanical vibrations. However, the materials through which an
5 X-ray cannot be transmitted are preferable, and a metallic material such as stainless steel, duralumin and a titanium alloy and a composite material such as carbon fiber-reinforced plastics are preferable. The horn cover 6 is provided around the horn 5 and the
10 flexible ultrasonic probe 17. One end of the horn cover 6 is connected to the ultrasonic vibration source 4 by an appropriate method, while the other end thereof is connected to the branch tube 7 by means of an adhesive to retain airtightness. However, it is not
15 limited to this connection method. The interior of the horn cover 6 is divided into partitioned chamber 23 and partitioned chamber 45 by means of a rubber O-ring 22, the rubber O-ring 22 being located at a node portion where the amplitude of the mechanical vibrations in the
20 longitudinal direction 46 of the horn 5 is the minimum, and shielding the passage of the liquid. In addition, by providing a portion of the horn cover 6 with a bellows portion 10 formed of a flexible material, it is possible to move the branch tube 7 forth and back by
25 virtue of the expansion and shrinkage of the bellows portion 10 in the longitudinal direction 46.

The ultrasonic probe 17 extends through the branch tube 7, and is disposed inside the inner hole

1 of the flexible tube 8 shown in Fig. 1. As shown in
Fig. 3(a), the tip of the ultrasonic probe 17 has such
a dimension that, when the bellows portion 10 is in an
extended state, the tip will not protrude beyond the tip
5 16 of the flexible tube 8. By this structure, when the
flexible tube 8 is inserted into the body, the tip
of the ultrasonic probe 17 is located in the inner hole
of the flexible tube 8, thereby making it possible to
prevent a blood vessel or the like from being damaged
10 by the tip of the ultrasonic probe 17.

Next, the suction device 11 is connected with
the inner hole of the flexible tube 8 via the branch
pipe 9, a changeover valve 13, the suction bottle 12,
and tubes 38, 39, and 40, as shown in Fig. 1. Further,
15 the liquid injector 14 is connected with the inner hole
of the flexible tube 8 via the branch tube 47, a pipe
37, a changeover valve 15, and a tube 41. As a method
of arranging the branch tubes 9 and 47, although Fig. 4
illustrates an example in which the branch tubes 9 and
20 47 are secured to the horn cover 6 by means of an
appropriate adhesive, the arrangement of a configuration
that facilitates the use by the operator is sufficient,
not limited to the illustrated arrangement.

As for the method of using this apparatus,
25 firstly, the partitioned chamber 23 and the inner holes
42, 20 are filled with a liquid which is not harmful
to the bodily tissue, such as physiological saline
solution, by an appropriate means so as to facilitate

1 slippage of the linear transmitting member 44 installed
inside the branch tube 7 and the flexible tube 8. For
instance, a passage leading to the partitioned chamber
23 is provided on the side of the horn cover 6, a liquid
5 such as physiological saline solution is injected into
the partitioned chamber 23 and the inner holes 42, 20
through that passage, and the passage is then filled.
Also, the inner suction hole 19 of the flexible tube 8
and the inner hole of the branch tube 9, communicating
10 with the suction device 11, are filled with a liquid
such as physiological saline solution by means of the
operation of the suction device 11 and the changeover
valve 13. With respect to the liquid injector as well,
the branch tube 47 and the inner hole 20 are similarly
15 filled with a liquid such as physiological saline
solution.

Next, while confirming the position of the
tip of the linear transmitting member 44 while projecting
X-rays, the flexible tube 8 is inserted into the body
20 and is inserted up to a portion to be operated on, e.g.,
a thrombus portion. For example, as shown in Fig. 5(a),
a balloon 26 is provided in the vicinity of the tip 16
of the flexible tube 8. The balloon 26 is temporarily
expanded using an inner hole (This inner hole is not
25 illustrated, but when the balloon is used the inner
hole similar to the inner hole 18, etc., is additionally
provided.) provided in the flexible tube 8 for the
balloon to such an extent that it does not effect

1 the flow of blood 24, so as to position the tip 16
since the flexible tube 8 sways owing to the flow of
the blood inside a blood vessel 25. At this time, the
mutual relationships between the flexible tube 8 and
5 the linear transmitting member 44 are in the state shown
in Fig. 3(a). Subsequently, by shrinking the bellows
portion 10 in the direction of the arrow 28 while hold-
ing a part of the horn cover 6 on the side of the branch
tube 7 in relation to the bellows portion 10, a working
10 portion 21 of the ultrasonic probe 17 is made to project
from the tip 16 of the flexible tube 8, as shown in
Fig. 3(b). Hence, the balloon 26 is made shrunk after
adjusting the position in relation to the thrombus 27.
Then, as shown in Fig. 5(b), the ultrasonic probe 17 is
15 mechanically vibrated at an ultrasonic frequency, the
working portion 21 is brought into contact with the
thrombus 27 to crush the thrombus 27. The small crushed
pieces of the thrombus are sucked by the suction device
11 through the inner suction hole 19 shown in Fig. 6(a)
20 and are removed out of the body. In addition, when the
position of the thrombus 27 is unclear, a contrast
medium or the like is injected through the liquid-
injecting inner hole 18 shown in Fig. 6(a) by means
of the liquid injector 14, and the above operation is
25 carried out while confirming the position of the
thrombus 27.

The material of the flexible tube 8 may be the
one which is normally used for a medical catheter, such

1 as soft vinyl chloride resin. On the other hand, the
materials of the branch tubes 7, 9, and 47 are not
particularly limited, but one which is capable of
adhering with the flexible tube 8 is preferable. The
5 inner hole and outer periphery of the flexible tube 8
and the inner holes of the branch tubes 7, 9, 47 are
coated with an antithrombotic substance. As this
antithrombotic substance, polyurethane, hydrogel,
heparinated polymer, urokinase-coupled polymer, or the
10 like is preferable, but the substance is not particularly
restricted.

Furthermore, the number of the inner holes of
the flexible tube 8 is not particularly restricted. For
instance, even in the case where one inner hole 20 is
15 provided as shown in Fig. 6(b), the inner hole 20 having
the ultrasonic probe 17 can be used to make it communi-
cate with the suction device 11 and the liquid injector
14 through a changeover valve.

An acute-angled portion is removed from the
20 working portion 21 at the tip of the ultrasonic probe
17, so as to prevent damage of the inner wall of a blood
vessel and the like. Although the configuration of
an end surface thereof is not particularly restricted,
oblique-angled or arcuate configuration is preferable.

25 Although the description has been made in
detail here with respect to the case where the apparatus
is used for removal of a thrombus in a blood vessel as
one embodiment according to the invention, the usage of

- 1 the apparatus is not restricted to this and it goes
without saying that the apparatus can be widely used
for crushing and removing other undesirable substances
in the body.

5 INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

According to the present invention, it is possible to insert an ultrasonic probe directly into the affected part where an undesirable substance, such as a thrombus, calcification aggregate, ulcer, or the
10 like occurring in a narrow tubular tissue such as a bent blood vessel is present, and crush the undesirable substance by means of mechanical vibrations of an ultrasonic frequency and immediately remove the same out of the body without adversely affecting the normal
15 surrounding tissue. Further, an incised portion at the body surface can be made only slightly larger than the diameter of a flexible tube enveloping an ultrasonic probe. Hence, an operation which gives a very low level of stress to the patient can be carried out within a
20 short period of time and the burden on the patient after the operation can be alleviated significantly, so that the apparatus is suitable as an ultrasonic surgical apparatus.

CLAIMS:

1. An ultrasonic surgical apparatus including an ultrasonic vibration source (4) for generating ultrasonic vibrations, an oscillator (1) for supplying high-frequency electric energy to said ultrasonic vibration source, a horn (5) connected to said ultrasonic vibration source and adapted to transmit and amplify mechanical vibrations of an ultrasonic frequency, and a suction device (11) for sucking and removing an undesirable substance from an operated part, characterized in that there are provided an ultrasonic probe (17) which is constituted by a flexible linear transmitting member secured at one end to a tip of said horn and having at the other end a working portion adapted to effect mechanical vibration of an ultrasonic frequency, a horn cover (6) at least a portion of which is made of a flexible material, and a flexible tube (8) having one or not less than two inner hole(s) and one or not less than two branch tube(s) communicating with said inner hole(s), and connected to said horn cover, and that said ultrasonic probe is disposed in the one inner hole and said suction device is connected to the one branch tube.
2. An ultrasonic surgical apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein a bellows-like portion is provided to a portion of said horn cover (6) made of a flexible material to form said horn cover such as to be flexible.
3. An ultrasonic surgical apparatus according to

Claim 1 or 2, wherein angled portions of said working portion (21) of said ultrasonic probe (17) are all oblique-angled or circular-arched in shape.

4. An ultrasonic surgical apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein a liquid injector (14) for injecting an irrigation liquid or the like is connected to said branch tube(s) of said flexible tube (8).

5. An ultrasonic surgical apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein said flexible tube (8) has a balloon (26) in the vicinity of said working portion of said ultrasonic probe (17) disposed in said inner hole thereof, and said balloon being adapted to be expanded and shrunk through the one inner hole.

6. An ultrasonic surgical apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the surfaces of said inner hole(s) in which said ultrasonic probe (17) is disposed and outer periphery of said flexible tube (8) are coated with an antithrombotic substance.

FIG. 1

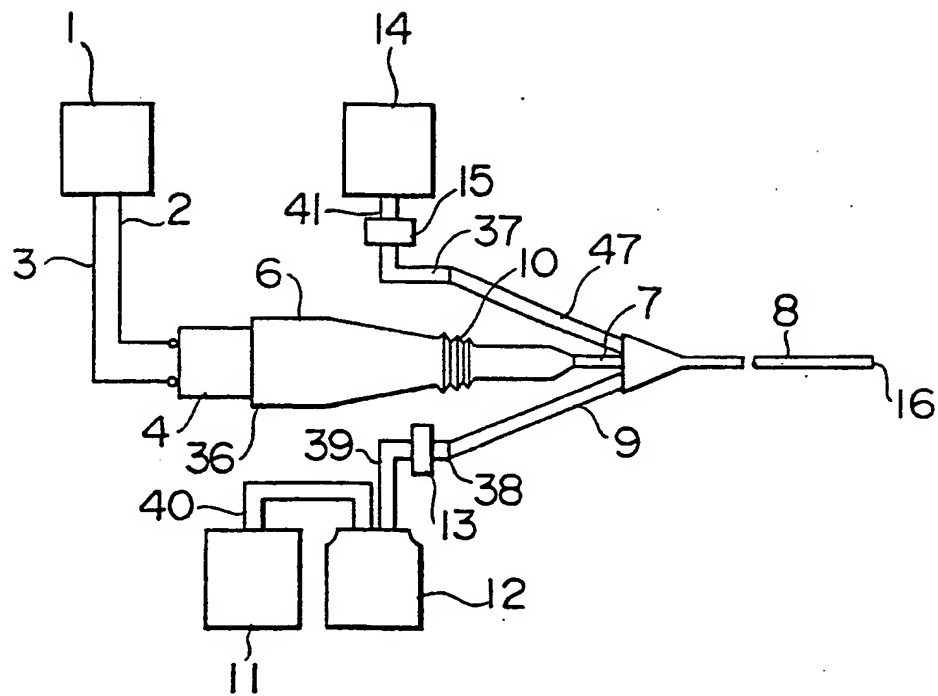


FIG. 2

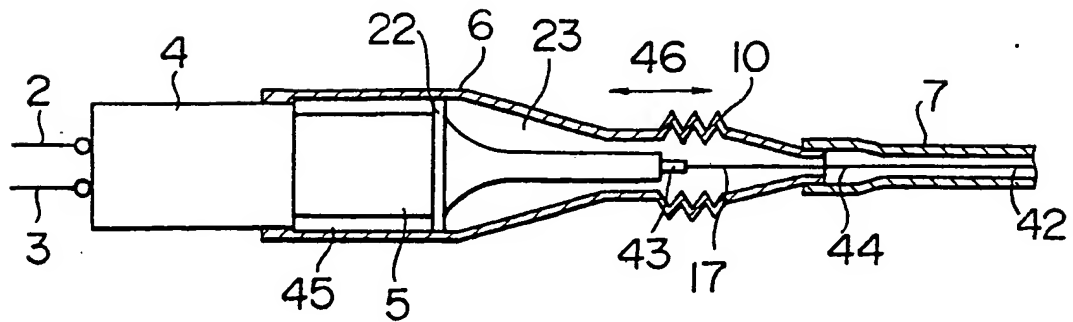


FIG. 3

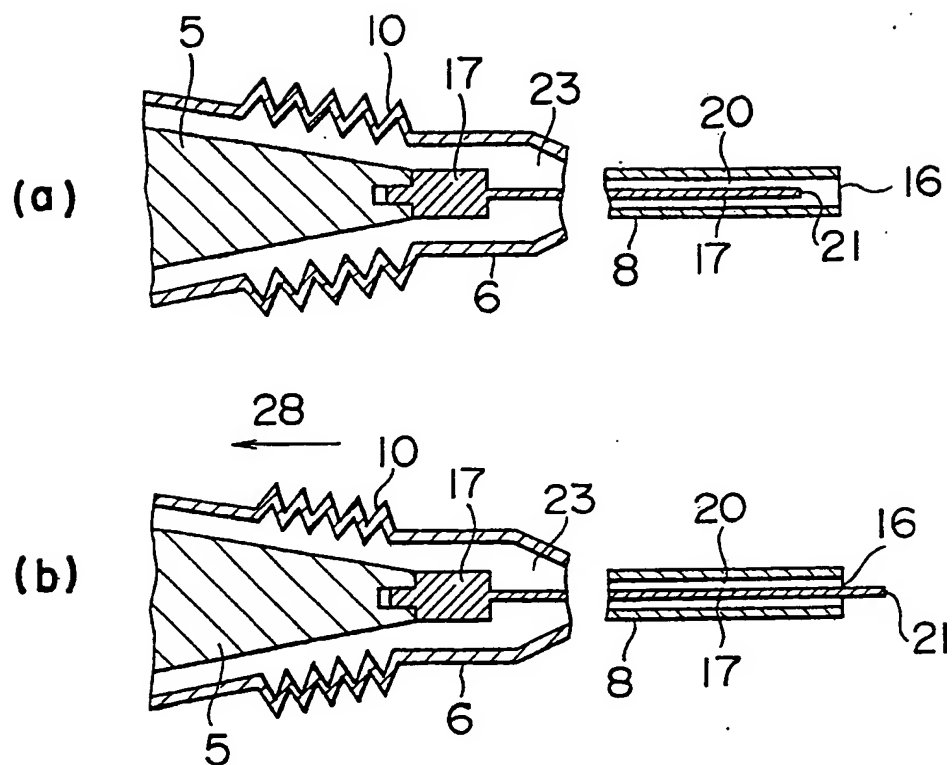


FIG. 4

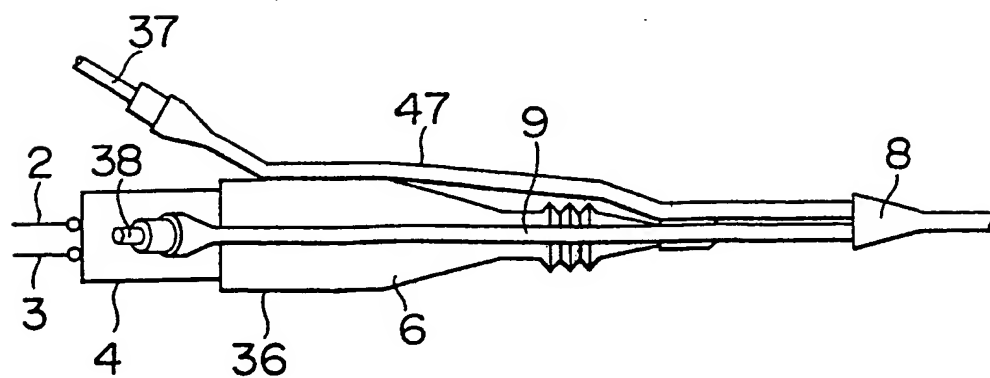


FIG. 5

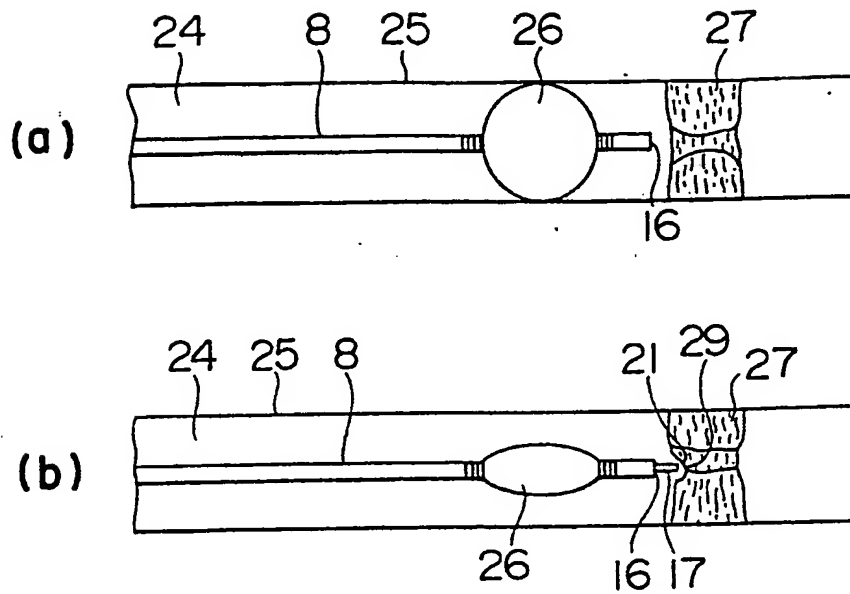


FIG. 6

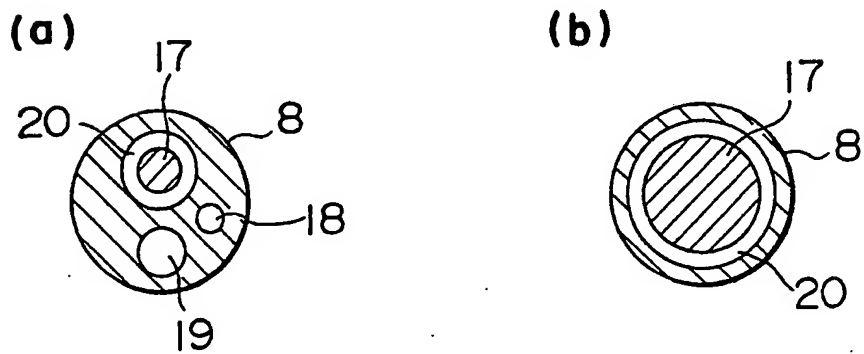
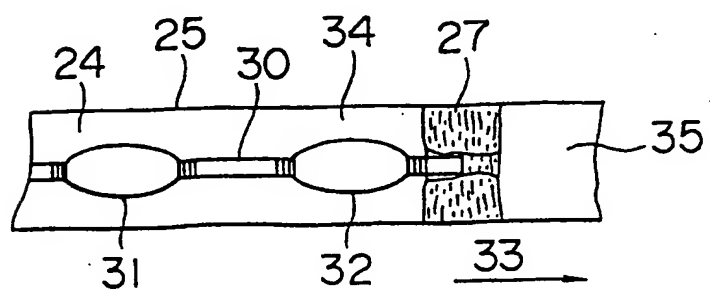


FIG. 7



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

0293472

International Application No.

PCT/JP86/00606

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) ²		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC		
Int.Cl. ⁴ A61B17/22, 17/32, 17/36		
II. FIELDS SEARCHED		
Minimum Documentation Searched ⁴		
Classification System	Classification Symbols	
IPC	A61B17/22, 17/32, 17/36	
Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched ⁴		
Jitsuyo Shinan Koho		1931 - 1987
Kokai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho		1971 - 1987
III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT ¹⁴		
Category ¹⁵	Citation of Document, ¹⁵ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹⁷	Relevant to Claim No. ¹⁸
X	JP, U, 60-55409 (Nagata Denki Kogyo Kabushiki Kaisha) 18 April 1985 (18. 04. 85) Pages. 1 to 2 (Family: none)	1, 4
Y	JP, U, 60-55408 (Nagata Denki Kogyo Kabushiki Kaisha) 18 April 1985 (18. 04. 85) Page 1 (Family: none)	1
Y	JP, A, 60-116347 (Nihon Sekigaisen Kogyo Kabushiki Kaisha) 22 June 1985 (22. 06. 85) Pages 1, 6 (Family: none)	1, 4
Y	JP, A, 60-5139 (Nihon Sekigaisen Kogyo Kabushiki Kaisha) 11 January 1985 (11. 01. 85) Pages 1, 5 (Family: none)	1, 4
<p>¹⁵ Special categories of cited documents: ¹⁶</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</p> <p>"Z" document member of the same patent family</p>		
IV. CERTIFICATION		
Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search ¹		Date of Mailing of this International Search Report ¹
February 9, 1987 (09. 02. 87)		March 2, 1987 (02. 03. 87)
International Searching Authority ¹		Signature of Authorized Officer ²⁰
Japanese Patent Office		